

REMARKS

Claims 1-64 are pending in this application. Claims 1-21 are rejected; claims 1-21 are objected to as not being recited with claims status identifiers; claims 22-62 are withdrawn from consideration; and claims 63-64 are mistakenly withdrawn. Claims 1 and 15 are amended; claim 2 is canceled hereby.

Responsive to the Examiner's withdrawal of claims 63-64, Applicants submit that their Response to Restriction Requirement and Election of Species, dated June 13, 2006, did not withdraw claims 63-64. In that Response, Applicants elected Group I, claims 1-21, 63 and 64 drawn to a method of making a web and the web. Applicants also elected the species represented by Fig. 13 with claims 1-21 reading thereon. Accordingly, Applicants submit that claims 63-64 should be considered. Having not been considered in the current Office Action, Applicants are unable to further address claims 63-64 in this response to the current Office Action.

Responsive to the rejection of claims 1-12 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent Application Publication No. US 2004/0237210 (Thoroe-Scherb et al.), Applicants have amended claim 1 to include the limitations of claim 2 and an additional limitation, and canceled claim 2. Accordingly, Applicants submit that claim 1, and claims 3-12 depending therefrom, are now in condition for allowance.

Thoroe-Scherb et al. discloses a method and an apparatus 10 for manufacturing a fiber web 12 provided with a three-dimensional paper structure. Fig. 3, for instance, shows a pulp suspension being introduced into a material inlet gap 44 by way of a headbox 48. A dewatering fabric 42 and an imprinting fabric 14 guide the pulp suspension around a forming roll 46, the pulp suspension being interposed between dewatering fabric 42 and imprinting fabric 14, which is also called a dewatering fabric (para. 82). Subsequently, imprinting fabric 14 and a web 12 are lead to

a dewatering apparatus 34, including clothing 36, and to a press nip 18, which is associated with a drying cylinder 20.

In contrast, claim 1, as amended, recites in part “dewatering in a forming area of the paper machine said fiber slurry through said forming fabric and not through said structured fabric.” (Emphasis added). Applicant submits that such an invention is neither taught, disclosed or suggested by Thoroe-Scherb et al., or any of the other cited references, alone or in combination, and includes distinct advantages thereover.

Thoroe-Scherb et al. discloses that imprinting fabric 14 also serves as a “dewatering fabric,” along with dewatering fabric 42 (para. 82). Indeed, on page 3 of the Office Action, it is stated that in Thoroe-Scherb et al. the “web dewatering occurs thr[o]ugh the structured fabric 14.” Structured/dewatering fabric 14 and dewatering fabric 42 arguably correspond respectively to a structured fabric and a forming fabric. Thoroe-Scherb et al., thus, fails to disclose dewatering occurring through the forming fabric and *not* through the structured fabric in a forming area of a paper machine.

An advantage of the present invention is that the structured fibrous web has a thicker pillow dimension and a higher basis weight in pillow areas, as compared to prior art. Further, fiber to fiber bonds are not broken as they can be in impression operations, which expand the web into valleys. Yet further, the structured fibrous web is more bulky or absorbent, as compared to prior art.

For the foregoing reasons, Applicants submit that claim 1, and claims 3-12 depending therefrom, are now in condition for allowance, which is hereby respectfully requested.

Responsive to the rejection of claims 13-14 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being unpatentable over Thoroe-Scherb et al., Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection of claim 13.

Thoroe-Scherb et al. is discussed above.

In contrast, claim 13 recites in part “a plurality of pillow portions each having a first basis weight property; and a plurality of connection portions each having a second basis weight property, each of said connection portions connecting at least two of said plurality of pillow portions, said first basis weight being greater than said second basis weight.” (Emphasis added). Applicant submits that such an invention is neither taught, disclosed or suggested by Thoroe-Scherb et al., or any of the other cited references, alone or in combination, and includes distinct advantages thereover.

Thoroe-Scherb et al. discloses “pillows” “which increase the water absorption capability and the bulk” (para. 36), raised/closed zones which “result[] in the desired water absorbing capability and the desired bulk” (para. 32)(Figs. 6-7), and recessed zones or bores which “result[] in web zones of high density for strength” (para. 32)(Figs. 6-7). Applicants submit, however, that Thoroe-Scherb et al. fails to disclose a comparison of the pillow portion *basis weight* and the connection portion *basis weight*.

An advantage of the present invention is that the structured fibrous web is more bulky or absorbent, as compared to prior art.

For the foregoing reasons, Applicants submit that claim 13, and claim 14 depending therefrom, are now in condition for allowance, which is hereby respectfully requested.

Responsive to the rejection of claims 15-21 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being unpatentable over Thoroe-Scherb et al., Applicants have amended claim 15. Accordingly, Applicants submit that claim 15, and claims 16-21 depending therefrom, are now in condition for allowance.

Thoroe-Scherb et al. is discussed above.

In contrast, claim 15, as amended, recites in part “dewatering in a forming area of the paper machine said fiber slurry through said forming fabric and not through said structured fabric,

thereby creating the web.” (Emphasis added). Applicant submits that such an invention is neither taught, disclosed or suggested by Thoroe-Scherb et al., or any of the other cited references, alone or in combination, and includes distinct advantages thereover.

Thoroe-Scherb et al. discloses that imprinting fabric 14 also serves as a “dewatering fabric,” along with dewatering fabric 42 (para. 82). Indeed, on page 3 of the Office Action, it is stated that in Thoroe-Scherb et al. the “web dewatering occurs thr[o]ugh the structured fabric 14.” Structured/dewatering fabric 14 and dewatering fabric 42 arguably correspond respectively to a structured fabric and a forming fabric. Thoroe-Scherb et al., thus, fails to disclose dewatering occurring through the forming fabric and *not* through the structured fabric in a forming area of a paper machine.

An advantage of the present invention is that the structured fibrous web has a thicker pillow dimension and a higher basis weight in the pillow areas, as compared to prior art. Further, fiber to fiber bonds are not broken as they can be in impression operations, which expand the web into valleys. Yet further, the structured fibrous web is more bulky or absorbent, as compared to prior art.

For the foregoing reasons, Applicants submit that claim 15, and claims 16-21 depending therefrom, are now in condition for allowance, which is hereby respectfully requested.

Responsive to the rejection of claim 21 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Thoroe-Scherb et al., Applicants have amended claim 15. Accordingly, Applicants submit that claim 21, which depends on claim 15, is now in condition for allowance.

Thoroe-Scherb et al. is discussed above.

In contrast, claim 15, as amended, recites in part “dewatering in a forming area of the paper machine said fiber slurry through said forming fabric and not through said structured fabric, thereby creating the web.” (Emphasis added). Applicant submits that such an invention is neither

taught, disclosed or suggested by Thoroe-Scherb et al., or any of the other cited references, alone or in combination, and includes distinct advantages thereover.

Thoroe-Scherb et al. discloses that imprinting fabric 14 also serves as a “dewatering fabric,” along with dewatering fabric 42 (para. 82). Indeed, on page 3 of the Office Action, it is stated that in Thoroe-Scherb et al. the “web dewatering occurs thr[o]ugh the structured fabric 14.” Structured/dewatering fabric 14 and dewatering fabric 42 arguably correspond respectively to a structured fabric and a forming fabric. Thoroe-Scherb et al., thus, fails to disclose dewatering occurring through the forming fabric and *not* through the structured fabric in a forming area of a paper machine.

An advantage of the present invention is that the structured fibrous web has a thicker pillow dimension and a higher basis weight in the pillow areas, as compared to prior art. Further, fiber to fiber bonds are not broken as they can be in impression operations, which expand the web into valleys. Yet further, the structured fibrous web is more bulky or absorbent, as compared to prior art.

For the foregoing reasons, Applicants submit that claim 21 is now in condition for allowance, which is hereby respectfully requested.

For the foregoing reasons, Applicants submit that no combination of the cited references teaches, discloses or suggests the subject matter of the amended claims. The pending claims are therefore in condition for allowance, and Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of all rejections and allowance of the claims.

In the event Applicants have overlooked the need for an extension of time, an additional extension of time, payment of fee, or additional payment of fee, Applicants hereby conditionally petition therefor and authorize that any charges be made to Deposit Account No. 20-0095, TAYLOR & AUST, P.C.

Should any question concerning any of the foregoing arise, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at (260) 897-3400.

Respectfully submitted,

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